

VLR-9/13/00 NRHP-11/22/00

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

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**1. Name of Property**

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historic name Byrd Presbyterian Church \_\_\_\_\_  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_ DHR File # 37-16 \_\_\_\_\_

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**2. Location**

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street & number 2229 Dogtown Road, P.O. Box 665 \_\_\_\_\_ N/A \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication  
city or town Goochland \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity \_\_\_\_\_  
state Virginia \_\_\_\_\_ code VA county Goochland code 075 zip code 23063 \_\_\_\_\_

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**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this x nomination \_\_\_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property x meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_\_\_\_\_ nationally \_\_\_\_\_ statewide x locally. ( \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

 10/3/2000  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official Date  
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HISTORIC RESOURCES  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_\_\_ meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. ( \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

\_\_\_ entered in the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_ determined eligible for the  
National Register \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the  
National Register \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ removed from the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper    Date  
                            of Action

#### 5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
- ☐ public-local
- ☐ public-State
- ☐ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
- ☐ district
- ☐ site
- ☐ structure
- ☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing Noncontributing

<input type="text"/> 1	<input type="text"/> 0 buildings
<input type="text"/> 1	<input type="text"/> 0 sites
<input type="text"/> 0	<input type="text"/> 0 structures
<input type="text"/> 2	<input type="text"/> 0 Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National  
Register  0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part  
of a multiple property listing.) N/A \_\_\_\_\_

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## 6. Function or Use

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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:

Sub:

RELIGION	religious facility
FUNERARY	cemetery

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Work in progress

Sub:

RELIGION	religious facility
FUNERARY	cemetery

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## 7. Description

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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

MID-19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY Greek Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK (Covered with concrete)

roof SLATE

walls BRICK

other stone (various types marking graves)

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Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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## 8. Statement of Significance

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Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☐ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☒ a owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ b removed from its original location.
- ☐ c a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ d a cemetery.
- ☐ e a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ f a commemorative property.
- ☐ g less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

\_\_\_\_ARCHITECTURE\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance 1837-1950  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates 1837  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Possibly Valentine Parrish  
and possibly Albert Cosby

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property 4.5 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18_240850	4177930	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

☐ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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J. G. Zehmer, staff compiler, Virginia Department of Historic Resources,  
name/title CLAUDETTE T. GRANT, CLERK OF SESSION  
organization BYRD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH date 4-20-00, 11-15-98,  
street & number 1749 CARTERSVILLE Road telephone (804)-970-3188  
city or town GOOCHLAND state VA zip code 23063

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**Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

- Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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**Property Owner**

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name \_\_\_\_The Presbytery of the James\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_1251 Presbytery Court\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_ (804)-262-2074 \_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_Glen Allen\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_VA\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_23060\_\_\_\_

Also: Board of Trustees, Byrd Cemetery Company, c/o Byrd Presbyterian Church,  
P. O. Box 665, Goochland, VA, 23063

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 1

Byrd Presbyterian Church  
Goochland County

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**Summary Description:** Located in a bucolic setting four miles west of Goochland Court House in Goochland County, Virginia, the Byrd Presbyterian Church is a notable example of the simple brick churches built throughout Virginia during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There is circumstantial evidence that noted local builders, Valentine Parrish and Albert Cosby may have had a hand in its construction begun in 1837 and completed the next year. It is a rectangular brick structure with Flemish bond on the front and common bond on the three-bay side walls and the rear wall. There is evidence to support the tradition that a front portico was planned, but never built. As was often the custom, it was built with two front doors, one serving the main floor and the other serving the balcony that was used by slaves. These doors were abandoned in the 1880s and a center door installed reflecting changes to the interior. Also in the 1880s the building was modernized by the installation of a pressed metal ceiling, a re-aligned stair to the balcony, tongue-and-groove wainscot, and new moveable pews possibly fabricated out of older box pews. The twelve windows retain their original sash. Pierced wooden valences with intact pulley systems for Venetian blinds also survive, a very rare example of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century window treatments. Behind the church is a large cemetery with stones dating back to the 1850s. It is partially bordered by a brick wall and its large trees and rolling terrain gently transition into the rolling farmland that surrounds the premises.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 2

Byrd Presbyterian Church  
Goochland County

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**Architectural Description:** The Byrd Presbyterian Church is a simple rectangular brick structure with a gable roof with its ridge parallel to the long side walls. The front is in well executed Flemish bond up to the eighth course below the eaves; from that point to the top of the gable the brick is laid in irregular common bond. When the change from two separate front doors to one central one was made in the 1880s, the brickwork was carefully matched and a century of ivy did a great deal to give the new work a matching patina. The variation in the brickwork of the gable, however, appears to be original and gives credence to the tradition that the building was intended to have a portico that was never built. The wooden pediment of the portico would have hidden this change in the brickwork.

The side walls are built in three-course common bond with Flemish variation. The eaves cornice is a simplified classical entablature. The rear wall is also in common bond, but the stretcher courses vary in number between the Flemish ones. There are two ranges of three windows on each side of the building. The upper range has 6-over-6 double-hung sashes and the lower 6-over 9. All windows have period blinds with fixed louvers. On both levels the windows are topped with thin wooden lintels. The lower lintels support splayed flat arches, while the upper ones are topped by single rows of headers. The roof is still covered in its original slate, probably obtained from the slate quarries in the region. A one-story brick wing was added across the back of the building in 1952.

The interior the church is 28 feet by 40 feet. At the west end is the balcony over the front door. It is accessed by a stair at the north end that rises in one straight flight with winders at the top. The stair and the balcony have similar railings with balusters square in section under molded handrails. The ceiling is covered in pressed metal in a pattern of small square recessed coffers. The front door and windows are framed with symmetrically molded architraves with roundel cornerblocks. Of particular note is the complete set of carved wooden valances that originally housed Venetian blinds. These feature a row of pointed arches with a stylized upright scalloped oak-like leaf in each arch and a smaller leaf of the same type pointing down in the triangular spaces between the apexes of the arches. The pulleys that served the cords which operated the blinds are still in place in the tops of the valances. The windows have been fitted with modern "plantation shutters" in recent times. At the east end of the very simple room is a small platform on which there are two Victorian chairs and a small pulpit. This pulpit was made out of a larger pulpit that was part of the earlier church furnishings. Freestanding pews in naturally finished pine flank a center aisle. They have typical late Victorian scroll topped ends which are lower than the backs and seem to have been built out of earlier material. This condition would support the tradition that they are the original pews, albeit reconfigured in the 1880s.

Behind the church is a cemetery unusually large for a small country church. The graves date back to at least the 1850s. Gravestones are typical types found throughout the period of significance. A low brick wall defines the western and southern sides of the cemetery with the main gate behind the northeast corner of the church. It is a rolling site with large trees along the sides framing views of the woods to the north and east and rolling farmland to the south and west.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACE  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   8   Page   3  

Byrd Presbyterian Church  
Goochland County, Virginia

**Statement of Significance**

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**Summary statement:** Rural churches in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Virginia dotted the landscape. They were "landmarks" in the truest sense of the word. Byrd Presbyterian Church in Goochland County, Virginia, is both typical and unusual and, therefore, satisfies Criterion C. It is typical in its size and location, but unusual in the survival of some of its architectural features such as its original slate roof, interior window valances, other interior fittings, unspoiled setting, and the size and continuity of use of its cemetery. In addition, its present congregation has an unbroken connection to the beginnings of the Presbyterian Church in Virginia. Its present building may have been built in the 1830s, but the founding of its congregation 90 years earlier by the eminent Presbyterian divine, Samuel Davies, gives its congregation a special place not only in Presbyterian history, but also in the study of religious toleration in colonial and post-colonial Virginia.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACE  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   8   Page   4  

Byrd Presbyterian Church  
Goochland County, Virginia

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**Historical Background:** In 1689 the English Parliament passed the Act of Toleration allowing some freedom of worship to dissenters while the Church of England remained the official state church. In 1699 the Virginia House of Burgesses passed a similar act for the colony. There, too, the Church of England remained the official church and was supported by the government. In the 1740s the Reverend Samuel Davies came from the New Castle Presbytery (Delaware) to Virginia. In 1748 Davies sought and received a "license to preach" from the royal Lt. Governor William Gooch. He soon established congregations in Louisa, Caroline, and Goochland counties. The Byrd congregation is directly descended from the group that met at Tucker Woodson's barn in Goochland. By 1759 the group was in its own building on Byrd Creek also in Goochland. For many years they remained at this site, and then shared space with the Episcopalians at the nearby Lickinghole Church. In May 1837, Samuel Finch and his wife Mary Christian Finch conveyed one acre of land to George Woodson Payne, Josiah Leake and Archibald Bryce, elders of the Presbyterian church for the purpose of building a Presbyterian church in the Belham community of Goochland County. The present building dates from this time.

The new brick church was built just up the hill close to the new stagecoach stop and tavern on the "new road" (Route 614) to Charlottesville. Entries in the diaries of Col. William Bolling of Goochland place Valentine Parrish and Albert Cosby working in the area in 1837. Since they are known to have worked on similar buildings (Parrish on the Goochland Courthouse 10 years earlier) there is good reason to believe that they may have had a hand in the Byrd Church.

For a time the church was also known as "Union Church," but, in 1883, the congregation decided to only use the earlier name. The church has always had a number of community leaders in its membership. The lists of elders from 1842 to 1894 compiled by Rev. Forrest Sheets include Judge A. R. Leake, Dr. Thomas Curd, Dr. Francis B. Watkins, Dr. G. W. Harris, and Dr. Moses E. Treadway. Clerks of Court include William Miller, William Miller, Jr., and Margaret Miller. Perhaps the most colorful members were Major James B. Ferguson, CSA, Purchasing Agent for the Confederacy in London and his wife Emma Henry Ferguson. Major Ferguson was a close friend of General Robert E. Lee and sent Lee the uniform he wore to the surrender at Appomatox. Emma Henry was the granddaughter of Patrick Henry and must have had some of her grandfather's somewhat reckless nerve. In order to join her husband in London, with her two children she boarded a pirate ship now operating as a blockade-runner. After displaying coolness while under fire from Union warships, the pirate captain called her the "pluckiest woman I have ever met," and the ragtag pirate crew cheered her. (The Fergusons and other descendants of Patrick Henry are buried in the Byrd Church cemetery.)

The church served not only the Presbyterian community in Goochland and the members who came from the region for presbytery meetings, but also the patterns of rural community religious life from 1838 onward. In 1934, the first countywide Sunday School was established at the church with the help of members J. Dennett and Elizabeth DeLong Guthrie, and Ms. Chilton Ryburn, then the Home Demonstration Agent for Goochland County. They compiled a list of all families with children in the area. The Guthries contacted each family and explained the plan as follows.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACE  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   8   Page   5  

Byrd Presbyterian Church  
Goochland County, Virginia

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They could bring the children to the church and themselves listen to a men's class and a women's Bible class meanwhile. If not, they could bring the children to the main road and we would at a certain hour pick them up and then return them. Response was good. Dennet would teach the men's class, Chilton the Women's, and I would take the children's class, corralling the young people to train for a half hour each Sunday after closing to prepare them for what they were to help teach the children the next Sunday and to give them materials to work with....

Our car was a Ford coupe and Chilton's a coupe. Dennett and Chilton each made several trips packing in children as they went up the road. We needed more cars which were not available at the church. Dennett knew Harry Briesmaster, an auto dealer in Crozier, public-spirited and successful. He lent us a large station wagon each Sunday which Dennett had to go get on Sunday morning and return after service with me trailing in our coupe. (Gutherie interviews, Scales, p.14).

This Depression-era program, typical of rural America in that period, continued into the 1950s when it was replaced by a regular Sunday school housed in a new annex built along the rear of the church building in 1952. The church continues to meet changing community needs in a variety of ways.

The cemetery behind the church began to be used in the 1850s. There are more than 100 graves there today, a larger number than is usually found with small country churches. It occupies about 1.5 acres. The cemetery is governed by a separate entity, the Byrd Cemetery Company.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACE  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   9   Page   6  

Byrd Presbyterian Church  
Goochland County, Virginia

**Major Bibliographical References**

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Davis, Vernon Perdue and James Scott Rawlings. Virginia's Ante-Bellum Churches. Richmond: The Dietz Press, 1978.

Ferguson, Emma Henry. "Running The Blockade: A Confederate Reminiscence," Goochland County Historical Society Magazine. 1996.

Loetscher, Lefferts A. A Brief History of the Presbyterians. Philadelphia: Westminster Press. 1978.

Scales, Roselle. Byrd Presbyterian Church and Its People, 1748-1998. Goochland: privately printed, 1998.

Sheets, Forest D. A Brief History of Byrd Presbyterian Church, Goochland Virginia, 1748. Goochland: privately printed, 1980.

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National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACE  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 10 Page 7

Byrd Presbyterian Church  
Goochland County, Virginia

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**Geographical Data**

**Verbal Boundry Description**

The property nominated as Byrd Presbyterian Church is identified as tax parcels numbered 29-1-36, 42-3-4, and 29-1-36C on the tax maps of Goochland County, VA.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundaries for the nominated property include all of the resources historically associated with the Byrd Presbyterian Church.

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
DIVISION OF MINERAL RESOURCES

GOOCHLAND QUADRANGLE  
VIRGINIA

7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

5459 IV SE  
(DABNEY'S)

